

MassDEP Revives the Regional Circuit Rider Program

MassDEP's Wetlands Circuit Rider Program was created as a pilot project in 1996 in response to requests from conservation commissions seeking guidance in the administration of the state Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). This program provides direct technical assistance and training to commissions on WPA implementation.

The circuit rider concept had its roots in colonial America, established at a time when county judges "rode the circuit", traveling by horse from town to town to hear and judge civil and criminal cases. The Wetlands Circuit Rider functions similarly by traveling to communities to provide outreach and technical training to conservation commissions. They also respond to technical assistance questions by telephone and email from commissions, environmental groups, the regulated community and the public. The Wetland Circuit Riders were well received by everyone, because of their informal, hands-on approach, and their ability to tailor assistance to the needs of conservation commissions.

With the success of the pilot project, MassDEP received funding for an expanded statewide Wetlands Circuit Rider Program when riverfront areas were added to the Wetlands Protection Act in 1996. The program continued to thrive until 2002 when the program fell victim to budget shortfalls.

In FY 2005, state funding for the Wetlands Circuit Rider Program was reinstated due to overwhelming support from conservation commissions, environmental groups and the regulated community. With at least one Circuit Rider in each regional office, MassDEP is reestablishing connections with conservation commissions. One-on-one support to conservation commissions, helping build commission networks, promoting good working relationships and sound decision-making characterizes the Circuit Rider Program.

Commissions should look for upcoming training opportunities at MassDEP's web site at www.mass.gov/dep, through their regional wetlands circuit rider, or by contacting Alice Smith, Wetlands Circuit Rider Coordinator.

NERO • 205B Lowell Street, Wilmington, MA 01887 • 978.694.3200

SERO • 20 Riverside Drive, Lakeville, MA 02347 • 508.946.2700

CERO • 627 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 • 508.792.7650

WERO • 436 Dwight Street, Springfield, MA 01103 • 413.784.1100

Outreach & Training

- Fundamentals of the Wetlands Protection Regulations
- Wetlands Identification and Resource Delineation
- Programmatic General Permits and Stream Crossing Standards
- Stormwater, Sediment and Erosion Control
- Understanding Wetlands Hydrology
- Dewatering Techniques
- Identification of Aquatic Invasive Plant Species
- New Regulations, Guidelines and Policies
- Wetland Replication Guidance

For schedules of workshops and training, call your regional circuit rider!

Technical Assistance

- On Field Sites
- Email
- Phone
- Meetings
- Guidance and Policy
- Providing Conservation Commission and MassDEP Interface



Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Robert W. Gollidge, Commissioner
Bureau of Resource Protection
Glenn Haas, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Wetlands/Waterways Program
Lealdon Langley, Division Director

MassDEP's Circuit Rider Program provides technical and procedural assistance to the state's conservation commissions, builds strong relationships with municipal boards, and helps resolve potential conflicts between developers and Commissions by assisting in the interpretation of the Wetlands Protection regulations.

Technical Assistance • Regulatory Guidance • Outreach & Training



MassDEP Wetlands Circuit Rider Program

northeast regional office

Jason Lederer is the Circuit Rider for the Northeast Region. Jason graduated from Union College, New York with a B.S. in Geology and an M.S. in Geology from Indiana University. He has completed extensive fieldwork and research in the Siberian Outback, Russia, Iceland, and throughout the United States. Jason has presented and published both in the US and internationally.

While completing his master's degree, Jason volunteered with a university-run outreach program aimed at educating college students and the local community about the science and environmental importance of such valuable resource areas as wetlands, riparian zones, and floodplains. Through this program, Jason taught the plant biology, hydrology, pedology, and geology of these resource areas as well as why they are important for sustaining life on Earth. Following his return to his home state of Massachusetts, Jason worked for a year as a consultant and field geologist focusing on environmental remediation of contaminated groundwater and soil.

Jason continues to teach geology and lectures part-time at the Boston Architectural Center in Boston. Reach Jason by phone, 978.694.3200, and by email: jason.lederer@state.ma.us.



The Wetlands Circuit Riders are dedicated to helping conservation commissions in their work to protect the state's valuable wetland resources. They accomplish this by providing training, outreach, answering technical assistance questions, and supporting regional conservation commission networks in all areas of wetlands regulation implementation.

central regional office

Kathy Robertson is the Circuit Rider for the Central Region. She comes to MassDEP with a background in earth sciences, land use planning, and environmental policy. Kathy holds a Bachelors degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia, with a minor in Architecture and a focus on green design, policy and planning. She also holds a Master of Public Administration in Earth Systems Science, Policy, and Management from Columbia University. Prior to her position at DEP, Kathy worked as an environmental consultant in southern California, working on environmental impact analysis, restoration plans, and permit applications associated with federal, state, and local energy and utility infrastructure projects. Kathy can be reached by phone, 508.767.2725, and by email: kathy.robertson@state.ma.us.



boston

Alice Smith is the Wetlands Circuit Rider Coordinator in Boston. Alice holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Rhode Island. She also completed a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies with a focus on Hydrology and Water Resource Management. Prior to coming to MassDEP, Alice worked 12 years as an Electrical Engineer conceptualizing, designing, and building image processing and computer systems. Following graduation from the Master's Degree program at Yale, Alice worked seven years as a Conservation Agent and environmental engineer for the Town of Westwood and as a private consultant. You can reach Alice by phone, 617.292.5854, and by email: alice.smith@state.ma.us.



southeast regional office

Christine Odiaga is the Circuit Rider for the Southeast Regional Office. She received a BS in Biology with a minor in Marine Studies from Northeastern University. Christine was hired by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project to sample and monitor construction discharges for compliance with the Project's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, and eventually rewrote the Best Management Practices section of the Project's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to also address construction generated discharges and infiltration. This six-year experience qualified her to become a Certified Professional in Erosion & Sediment Control.

Christine was Conservation Agent/Stormwater Coordinator for the Town of Wakefield for three years. In addition to implementing all aspects of the Wetlands Protection Act, she worked with other town boards and departments to raise awareness about resource protection and stormwater management as early in the permitting process as possible.

Christine also briefly worked as Conservation Agent for the City of Taunton. She currently serves as the MA representative to the Northeast Chapter of the International Erosion Control Association. You can reach Christine by phone, 508.946.2836, and by email: christine.odiaga@state.ma.us.



western regional office

Anthony Zaharias is one of two Circuit Riders for the Western Regional Office.

Tony holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Regional Planning from Westfield State College. Previously, Tony worked as a coastal wetland analyst for the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management in the Outer Banks area. Other professional experience includes; performing regulatory oversight of drinking water supply facilities as an Environmental Analyst with the MassDEP Water Supply program, collecting stream gaging data and water quality samples as a Hydrologic Technician with the U.S. Geologic Survey, and performing analysis of oceanographic data for the United States Navy as a SONAR technician and anti-submarine warfare specialist. Reach Tony by phone, 413.755.2147, and by email: anthony.m.zaharias@state.ma.us.



Mark Stinson is also a Circuit Rider for the Western Regional Office.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and has also taken

Masters level courses in Forestry Management at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He has over 13 years of experience at the conservation commission level as a commissioner, chair and agent for a Western Massachusetts community. Mark can be reached by phone, 413.755.2257, and by email: mark.stinson@state.ma.us.



 I do not know what we would do without your help. 
sutton conservation commission